



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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ELEVEN MORE BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS ***Residents Urged to Report Dead Birds to County Vector Control***

County Vector Control officials announced today that 11 more dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), bringing the total number of positive birds to 22 this year.

"Last season, a total of 34 birds tested positive for West Nile virus. This year we already have 22 and there are still two months left in the mosquito-breeding season," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "It's important that we pay close attention to West Nile virus activity throughout the County. This can only be accomplished by a strong commitment from the whole community in reporting dead birds."

Of the 11 birds that recently tested positive for WNV, five were American crows found in Kearny Mesa, El Cajon, Alpine, Oceanside and San Marcos. The six other birds were Western Scrub jays found in Bonsall, Rainbow, Lakeside, Valley Center, Ramona and Fallbrook.

Statewide this year, there have been six human deaths from West Nile virus and 208 people infected with the virus. In addition, 148 horses have tested positive for WNV, resulting in the deaths of 67 of the horses. A total of 1,502 dead birds have tested positive this year in the state. There have been no human illnesses or positive horses in San Diego County this year.

Residents should report dead crows, ravens, jays, hawks or owls if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours, do not have a foul odor, are not covered with ants or flies, are not stiff, and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals.

It's important for people to take personal protection measures to prevent mosquito bites to avoid acquiring the virus. When outside, especially between dusk and dawn, people should use insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. These repellents are available at sporting goods, drug and discount retail stores. Also, screens on doors and windows should be kept in good repair.

To prevent mosquito breeding, residents should eliminate standing water around their homes. To control mosquito larvae, residents can stock decorative pools and ponds with free mosquito-eating fish, available at 14 locations countywide.

For more information, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the official County West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com. ###